

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY CHILDREN'S NETWORK

Policy Council Minutes June 26, 2002

Members/Representatives Present:

- Charles Adams, Community Services Department
- Carol Anselmi, HSS Administration
- Karen Bell, District Attorney
- Jeff Broyde, Public Defender's Office
- Narcisco Cardona, San Bernardino City Schools
- Randy Schulz for Cathy Cimbalo, Director, Department of Children's Services
- Judge Donna Garza, Juvenile Court - Chairperson
- Andy Gruchy, Department of Behavioral Health
- Terry Kramer, Department of Behavioral Health
- Don Larkin, Children's and Families Commission
- Joyce Lewis, Department of Behavioral Health
- Rudy Lopez, Department of Behavioral Health
- Susan Melanson, Children's Network
- Kent Paxton, Children's Network Officer
- Mel Rinewalt, Probation Department
- Claudia Spencer, Department of Public Health
- Dennis Stout, District Attorneys' Office
- Ruth Stringer, County Counsel
- Kathy Watkins, HSS - Legislation
- Tammy Williams, Children's Network
- Ray Wingerd, Chief of Probation
- Roberta York, Director of Preschool Services
- Edward Rowe, Children's Network
- Bonnie O'Connor, Executive Director of Children's Fund

The meeting of the Children's Policy Council was called to order at 12:10 p.m. and convened by Carol Anselmi in the Citrus Room, Fifth Floor, County Government Center, Judge Garza arrived later and chaired the remainder of the meeting.

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

Carol Anselmi welcomed those present and introduced Randy Schulz, Deputy Director from Department of Children's Services (DCS) filling in temporarily for Cathy Cimbalo. Self-introductions were made.

2.0 Approval of Agenda

Agenda was approved as submitted.

3.0 Approval of May 22, 2002 Minutes

May 22 minutes were approved as submitted.

4.0 Information Items

4.1 Children's Fund Report

Bonnie O'Connor reported the following activities:

- The annual Memorial Gary Anderson Golf Tournament held on June 10, 2002 raised \$275,000.
- There will be changes in the Christmas campaign this year incorporating the SugarPlum Project from DCS.
- There will be a Children's Fund Board Retreat soon that will focus on the Strategic Report.
- The Strategic Report will be shared with this group.

4.2 Summary of Child Abuse Prevention Month Activities

Susan Melanson reported the following activities:

- More than 400,000 pieces of educational material was distributed throughout the county.
- Eight cities issued proclamations of support.
- A partnership list was developed that included members from all the committees affiliated with Children's Network to expand the level of coverage for both the Child Abuse Prevention and Safe Kids Summer campaigns.
- The campaign kick-off was held on Tuesday, March 26th with a Resolution presented by the Board of Supervisors, followed by a press conference and a flag raising ceremony on the front lawn of the County Government Center.
- The 4th Annual Shine A Light on Child Abuse awards breakfast was held at the San Bernardino Radisson on April 4th with a record of 500 in attendance.
- The 3rd Annual Family Celebration picnics were again held at the 3 Regional Parks and were again successful.

Kent Paxton thanked Susan Melanson and Bonnie O'Connor for their efforts on child abuse prevention activities.

4.3 Update on SB 1744

Kent Paxton reported that there was a very good discussion about this bill at the last meeting. Since this group has met, this bill died.

Kathy Watkins mentioned that this bill could be resurrected next year.

4.4 CSOC Update

Rudy Lopez reported that the governor still might cut out the CSOC (Children's System of Care) funds from the state budget. Rudy also mentioned that the program would continue to be operational as it is now focusing on the reduction of high cost placements of children, etc. Space is being looked at now to house countywide the CSOC staff.

Kent Paxton mentioned that work has begun on the CSOC, MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) but will be held off until September, 2002 for further discussions. Kent mentioned that the bottom line for CSOC staff is to prevent high cost placements of children, when not necessary. Kent reported that Ed Rowe has begun to meet with staff at the DCS offices and the DBH clinics to get referrals for the Family Preservation Councils.

Andy Gruchy reported that he attends a quarterly a meeting of the larger counties in California and per capita our county is average with the state on the number of children placed in out of home care. Andy mentioned that there are over 1,500 children age 5 and under placed in out of home care in our county.

Bonnie Konowitch referred everyone to her interoffice memo, titled, "Grant Opportunities - CSOC". Bonnie invited members to contact her for assistance researching grants, funding, etc.

5.0 Discussion/Action Items

5.1 Group Home Assessment: Discussion and Action Required to forward Group Home Needs Assessment to the Board of Supervisors

Kathy Watkins referred everyone to the 3-ring binder on Group Home Analysis. The information is the result of the second years' group home assessment and is very comprehensive.

The information in the binder was formulated from surveys filled out by placement workers at DCS, DBH, and Probation. The Group Home Providers and some Juvenile Court staff were surveyed as well. Kathy mentioned that the overview of the report could be found in section 1. This study was done at the request of the Board of Supervisors for the approval of new group homes in San Bernardino County.

- The workers from DBH, DCS, and Probation mentioned that they have difficulty placing children who have; sexual aggression, severe behavioral problems, multiple failed placements, physical aggression, and are fire starters.
- It was mentioned that most group homes in this county would not accept children with the above severe problems, resulting in children being placed out of county.
- It was noted the changes in the number of placements for children have drastically changed for Probation and DCS, there was further discussion for the reasons why this has occurred.
- There was discussion about placements at Loma Linda Behavioral Center at costs of \$800 per day. Kent suggested CSOC and Wraparound Services might identify alternatives to these high cost placements such as 24-hour nursing care.

Narciso Cardona mentioned that in San Bernardino City 50% of the children placed in Special Ed Programs are not San Bernardino County children.

Kathy Watkins referred everyone to the map in Section 3 that shows where all the 95 group homes are located. Kathy mentioned that she is able to get information by zip code on placements of DCS children, but for further detailed information would have to go to U.C. Berkley. U.C. Berkley is conducting a statewide study and has more confidential information.

Judge Garza was concerned about children not having reunification efforts and the group homes not facilitating visits with the children and parents. It appears that some of the group homes have only had 1 bed that was vacant for a period of a few months, indicating they are not hurting financially.

Judge Garza suggested that we need to better market ourselves to make San Bernardino County more attractive to vendors so that we can get appropriate placement facilities for these children. A motion was made to take this item to the Board of Supervisors.

5.2 Discussion requested: State Budget Update

Kent talked about the potential losses in the following programs; CSOC, Public Health, D.A. etc. if the State imposes budget cuts. The current plan is for departments to continue their collaborative work to provide the best treatment possible for the children served.

Kent mentioned that Policy Council will be dark in August, but there will be a small meeting to discuss the work plan for Children's Network. Children's Network staff will assist other county departments in researching and writing grants for funding to keep valuable programs in place.

6.0 Other

Rudy Lopez referred everyone to the flyer distributed for the Mental Health Summit Conference in Ontario on November 6th and 7th. Flyers have already gone out and you will be receiving registration forms.

7.0 Public Comment

8.0 Adjournment

Next regularly scheduled meeting will be July 24, 2002.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Williams
Children's Network Policy Council Recording Secretary

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